
CIRM Early Investigators High School Stem Cell Research Program

Grant Award Details

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Grant Type: SPARK

Grant Number: EDUC3-08431

Project Objective: The project objective is to manage the SPARK program that provides 8 week stem cell research internships for high school students. The Program Director was in charge of recruiting students from underprivileged communities, place these students in stem cell research labs at leading institutions in California, and train the students in stem cell science and research techniques. The PDs were also responsible for implementing the CIRM social media guidelines which included having students post pictures about their internship experience on Instagram and write a blog. They also had to coordinate a patient engagement activity where students get first hand experience with patients and what they go through. Lastly the PDs had to coordinate their students attendance at the 2016 SPARK conference, making sure that their poster presentations and speeches were prepared.

Investigator:

Name:	Henry Lester
Institution:	California Institute of Technology
Type:	PI

Award Value: \$214,771

Status: Active

Grant Application Details

Application Title: CIRM Early Investigators High School Stem Cell Research Program

Public Abstract:

The CIRM Early Investigator High School (EiHS) Stem Cell Research Program enables socioeconomically challenged students from ethnic groups that are unrepresented in science and medicine to step into the shoes of stem cell researchers. In addition to providing advanced technical training, the eight-week summer program fosters a wide range of academic and interpersonal skills useful in any work environment. Like professional scientists, students learn hands-on science techniques and complete an original research project in the laboratory of an internationally recognized scientist. They attend collegiate-level lectures, read and critique scientific publications, debate central issues such as ethics, public policy and patient advocacy, and attend special career forums. They also communicate their work to friends, family and scientists via a university-level poster session and the EiHS Journal, a free scientific publication that they write and edit. The CIRM EiHS program is of direct benefit to stem cell research in California because it creates a pipeline not only for training future scientists, but also for increasing diversity and ensuring that our future doctors and scientific leaders are individuals of all genders and races. It also provides a unique opportunity for at-risk students — who might not otherwise attend college or pursue advanced education in a college-level environment — to connect with university professionals. Participating students undergo significant enrichment as students, scientists and individuals in addition to creating memories and friendships that last a lifetime.

Statement of Benefit to California:

To fully benefit from the vast potential of stem cell research and advance as a society, we must ensure our doctors and scientists originate from a diverse range of ethnic and cultural backgrounds. However, at-risk students from socioeconomically challenged communities often lack access to the advanced academic training and enrichment needed to forge successful careers in science or medicine. The proposed program will strengthen the future of scientific research by providing socioeconomically disadvantaged high school students from ethnic groups that are underrepresented in science the opportunity to take part in hands-on research in a professional college setting. The students will learn advanced and highly specific science practices and acquire broadly applicable skills that could benefit any workplace. The program will train a future generation of scientists with the skills and public awareness to keep California at the forefront of stem cell science and engage college educators in the importance of mentoring at-risk youth

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